

CHAPTER IV.

Account of the Ecclesiastical Government of the Culdees continued.—Of the Mission of Bishop Aidan to the Northumbrians.—Mistranslations in the modern English Version of Bede.—Of the Seniores at Iona.—Whether the Term denoted Bishops, or Presbyters?—Whether the Culdean Government resembled that of a modern University?—Of Gillan's Reasoning.—If the Episcopal Missionaries to Northumbria were amenable to the College of Iona?

LLOYD proceeds, in his attempt to prove that the Culdees admitted a difference, as to office, between bishops and presbyters, by referring to Bede's account of the mission of Aidan to the Northumbrians. One, whose name is said to have been Corman,¹ had been sent to them some time before. But, from the austerity of his manners, not being acceptable to them, he returned to his monastery at Hii. Here, “having in a council of the seniors given an account of his

¹ Boeth. Hist. lib. ix. c. 20.

ill reception," says Lloyd, "and discoursing well of the matter, all the seniors pitched upon him, and judging him worthy to be a bishop, they decreed that he ought to be sent; it follows that so *they ordained him*, and sent him."¹ But the conclusion which he deduces from this account is truly curious. "Then at least there were present two bishops for Aidan's ordination; and if the see of Dunkeld was then founded, as old writers tell us, the bishop of that place *might* make a third: or there *might be* some other, of whom Bede had no occasion to tell us; *for he could little think that ever it would come to be a question*, whether Aidan were ordained by bishops or by presbyters."²

This is certainly as commodious a method of securing a quorum of bishops, for canonical ordination, as ever was devised. An appeal is made, on one side of a question, to a passage in ancient history, in order to prove that there was ordination merely by presbyters. On the other side, it is inferred from the passage, although it makes not the least mention of the presence of bishops, that there must have been at least two, if not three, present;—because, forsooth, Aidan could not be regularly ordained without them. But how does Bede overlook these superior, and indispensably necessary, members of the council? For a very sufficient reason. The good man never once dreamed, that, in future ages, any one would be so foolish as to suppose, that a person would be ordained to the episcopal office, or to any cle-

¹ Historical Account, p. 104.

² Ibid.

rical office, without the imposition of the hands of bishops. That very historian, who has told us, in as express terms as human language could supply, that “the whole province, and even the very bishops,” were subject to this Presbyter-Abbot, could not imagine such an absurdity, as that it would be inferred from his words, that the power could possibly originate where the subjection was due. Although he asserts, that it was “after an unusual manner,” or “quite out of the common order,” that bishops should be subject to a presbyter; how could it occur to him, that any one would imagine, that their ordination might possibly be somewhat of the same description?

In the English version of Bede's history, printed A. 1723, this passage is, in two instances, rendered in such a way as must tend to mislead the mere English reader. It is said, that, on the return of the former missionary, they “in a *great council* seriously debated what was to be done.”¹ From the language used, one would naturally suppose that this had been a national council, called for the purpose; or perhaps something more than a mere national council, as including delegates from the British, Irish, and Saxon churches; a council in which bishops could hardly be wanting. But this is a gross mistranslation, whether from design, or not, I do not

¹ P. 190.—Redierit patriam, atque in conventu Seniorum retulerit, quia nil prodesse docendo genti ad quam missus erat, potuisset, &c. At illi, ut perhibent, tractatum magnum in concilio quid esset agendum, habere coeperunt. Lib. iii. c. 5.

pretend to determine. It is surprising, however, that any one, who had ever read a sentence of Latin, should find a *great council* here. Bede merely says ; “ They begun, tractatum magnum in Concilio—habere, to treat fully,” or “ to have much deliberation, in the council, as to what should be done.” And what was this *Concilium*? It appears to have been merely the ordinary *conventus* of the presbyters or seniors. King Alfred accordingly renders it, in his Anglo-Saxon version, *gemote*, i. e. meeting.

Stapleton, the old translator of Bede, although warmly attached to the church of Rome, has rendered the passage in a very different manner :—“ He returned into his countre, and in the *assemble of the elders*, he made relation, how that in teaching he could do the people no good to the which he was sent, for as much as they were folkes that might not be reclaymed, of a hard capacite, and fierce nature. Then the *elders* (as they say) began *in counsaile* to treate *at long* what were best to be done,” &c.¹

There is another *oversight* in the modern version. “ He [Aidan] being found to be endu’d with siugular discretion, which is the mother of other virtues, and accordingly *being ordained*, they sent him to their friend King Oswald to preach.” But the passage literally is : “ Having heard this, the faces and the eyes of *all who sat there* were turned to him ; *they* diligently weighed what he had said, and determined that he was worthy of the episcopal office, and that he should be sent to instruct the unbelieving and the illiterate, it being proved

¹ Fol. 81, a.

that he was supereminently endowed with the gift of discretion, which is the mother of virtues: and thus *ordaining* him, *they sent him* to preach.”¹ Nothing can be more clear than that, according to Bede, the very same persons, who found him worthy of the episcopate, both *ordained* and *sent* him. And who were these? Undoubtedly, if there be any coherence in the language of the venerable historian, they were the *all who sat there*, or who constituted that conventional meeting, which has been magnified into “a great council.” For, there is not the slightest indication of any change of persons. Nay, they were the very same, who had sent his predecessor Cormán, and to whom he at this time returned, and reported his want of success in his ministry. Having received his mission from them, he, although clothed with episcopal honours, considers himself as still subject to their authority. He, therefore, like a faithful messenger, returning to those who had sent him, gives an account, both of his ill reception and of the causes of it. As far as appears from the narrative, this council was held, not with any immediate design of appointing a successor, but merely for receiving that report from their former missionary, which it was his duty to give, and which it belonged to them, as his judges, to receive.

The old version gives no other view of the sense. “ Al-

¹ Quo audito, omnium qui consedebant ad ipsum ora et oculi conversi, diligenter quid diceret discutiebant, et ipsum esse dignum episcopatu, ipsum ad erudiendos incredulos et indoctos mitti debere decernunt; qui gratia discretionis, quae virtutum mater est, ante omnia probatur imbutus; sieque illum ordinantes, ad praedicandum miserunt. Hist. lib. iii. c. 5.

that were at the assemble, looking vpon Aidan, debated diligently his saying, and concluded that he above the rest was worthy of that charge and bishopricke, and that he shoulde be sent to instruct those vnlerned paynims. For he was tried to be chiefly garnished with the grace of discretion, the mother of all vertues. Thus *making him bishop*, they *sent him forthe to preach.*"¹

Thus, it undeniably appears, from the connection of the history, that those who *sat there* were the *Majores natu*, or *Seniores*, to whom King Oswald had made application; the very same persons who had *sent* Corman, who *received* the report of his mission, who *passed a judgment* on his conduct in approving of what was said by Aidan concerning it, who *determined* or *decreed* that Aidan was worthy of the episcopate, who *ordained* and who *sent* him. And who were these persons? Let the Bishop of St Asaph answer the question. They were "the Senior Monks," as he designs them in one place,² or "a council of the Seniors," as he calls them in another; carefully distinguishing them from bishops, two of whom, he thinks, must have been "present for Aidan's ordination;"³ although he is so very reasonable, that he will be satisfied, if we give him but one, for he says, "If more could not be had, one might do it in case of necessity."⁴ But, as we have not a vestige of proof from the record, that so much as one bishop was present, if all this was done by "a coun-

¹ Stapleton's Bede, Fol. 81, 6.

² Historical Account, p. 97.

³ Ibid. p. 104.

⁴ P. 103.

cil of Senors," or Presbyters, how can the inference be avoided, that Aidan received *presbyterial* ordination?

Gillan seems fully aware of the consequence. He, therefore, takes different ground. He will not, with Lloyd, hazard the determination of the question on the bare possibility of the presence of *three*, of *two*, or of a *single* bishop. He invests all the Seniors with the episcopal dignity. "Oswald," he says, "earnestly desiring the conversion of his subjects, wrote to the Scottish bishops, (designed here, by Bede, *Majores natu*, and in the 5th Ch. *Seniores*, the very word by which Tertullian designs bishops, *Apolog.* c. 39.) entreating that a bishop, *Antistes*, might be sent to instruct his subjects." Concerning the predecessor of Aidan, he adds, that he "made a report of his mission in a synod of the bishops and clergy, by whom Aidanus was appointed his successor."¹

Thus, the friends of episcopacy contradict each other, as to the very meaning of the terms used by the ancient historian. The writer last quoted can scarcely agree with himself. For, in the course of two sentences, he gives two significations to the same word. In the first he says, that it is the bishops who are "designed here—*Seniores*;" in the second, he enlarges the sense so as to include "the bishops and clergy." That the place referred to was the island of Hii, there can be no doubt. Lloyd observes, that here there could be but "one bishop at a time," as having charge of the province.² But Gillan, in the first instance at least, finds

¹ Life of Sage, p. 42, 43.

² Historical Account, p. 178.

as many bishops as there were seniors. This sense of the word he attempts to confirm by the authority of Tertullian, who, he says, designs bishops in this manner. But he has chosen one of the most unfavourable passages, for the cause of episcopacy, that he could have found in the book. Speaking of the ministry of the gospel, and of the exercise of discipline, Tertullian says ; “ Certain approved seniors preside, being admitted to this honour, not from the influence of money, but from character.”¹ His commentator Pamelius, although a bigotted papist, never thought of driving matters so far as our modern writer. For he thus explains the passage : “ But least this should be believed to be a tumultuous assembly, these, he says, preside, who by all the Greeks are called *Presbyters*, but by us *Seniors*, not all, but those who are approved by the testimony of all.”²

The term was used in the same sense in the Cyprianic age. Hence Firmilian, an African bishop, in an epistle addressed to Cyprian, speaking of the necessity of preserving unity in doctrine, especially where there was a multitude of prophets, or public teachers, says ; “ Wherefore it is found necessary among us, that we, the seniors, and the presidents or bishops, should annually meet together, for putting these things in order which are committed to our care ; that, if any matters

¹ Praesident probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio, sed testimonio adepti. Tertullian. loc. cit.

² Sed ne tumultuarius quidam coetus is esse credatur, praesunt, inquit, omnibus si qui a Graecis presbyteri, a nobis seniores dicuntur; non omnes, sed qui communis omnium testimonio probantur. Ibid. p. 69.

are more important, they should be regulated by common council," &c.¹ The same Pamelius, as he supposes that this epistle had been translated by Cyprian from Greek into Latin, says; " It appears to me that what is in Greek *Presbyters*, has been here rendered *Seniors*, in the same manner as the name *President* is substituted for *Bishop*; which, as it is still used by Cyprian, frequently occurs in this epistle."²

It is singular, that, in this very epistle, Firmilian also applies the other designation used by Bede, to the rulers of the church. As used by him, it undoubtedly includes both the *seniores* and the *praepositi*; and shews that the church, in his time, had not entertained an idea of excluding *Presbyters* from the right of ordaining, any more than from that of dispensing baptism. Speaking of heretics, he says; " They can possess neither power nor grace, since all power and grace are placed in the church, where the *Majores natu*, the seniors, preside, who possess the power both of baptizing, and of the imposition of hands and of ordination."³

Gillan clearly perceived that the same persons are said

¹ Qua ex causa necessariò apud nos fit, ut per singulos annos seniores et praepositi in unum conveniamus, ad disponenda ea quae curae nostrae commissa sunt: ut si qua graviora sunt, communī consilio dirigantur. Cyprian. Opera, Epist. 75. § 3.

² *Seniores* vertisse mihi videtur quod Graecè est πρεσβυτεροι. Quum autem et *praepositi* nouen pro *episcopo* accipiatur, sicut ubique a Cypriano, frequens etiam fit in hac epistola. Annot. ibid. p. 243.

³ Omnis potestas et gratia in ecclesia constituta sit, ubi praesident majores natu, qui et baptizandi, et manum imponendi et ordinandi possident potestatem. Epist. 75. § 6. V. Note on the word *Ealdordom*, below, p. 70.

to judge Aidan to be worthy of being made a bishop, to appoint him, to ordain him, and to send him to preach the gospel in Northumbria. He therefore found it necessary to give a new signification to *Majores natu* and *Seniores*. But, conscious, perhaps, that this would not stand the test of examination, he endeavours to secure a retreat in the use of the term *ordained*, as if it must necessarily denote the gift of an office superior to that of a presbyter. “Now,” says he, “what can be the meaning of his being thought worthy of the office of a bishop, and his being ordained? Certainly he was a presbyter before he was a monk of Hii, and a member of the synod, and spoke and reasoned, and made a great figure in it.”¹ But what assurance have we of this? Bishop Lloyd shews that many monks were laymen. Bede himself admits that of the many who daily came from the country of the Scots, into the provinces of the Angles over which Oswald reigned, and entered the monasteries, only some were presbyters. He seems to say, that they all preached or acted as catechists; but that those only baptized who had received the sacerdotal office. Having observed, that they instructed the Angles in regular discipline, he adds: “For they were for the most part monks who came to preach. Bishop Aidan himself was a monk,” &c.²

¹ Ibid.

² Exin cooperere plures per dies de Scottorum regione venire Britanniam, atque illis Anglorum provinciis quibus regnavit rex Osuald, magna devotione verbum fidei praedicare, et credentibus gratiam baptismi, *quicumque* sacerdotali erant gradu praediti, ministrare.—Imbuebantur praeceptoribus Scottis parvuli Anglorum, una cum majoribus, studiis et observatione disciplinae regularis.

As he had already distinguished those who had the sacerdotal office from such as were merely monks, there is great reason to suppose that he means here to say, that Aidan had been a mere monk before his ordination as bishop.

His speaking and reasoning, in what is called the Synod, will not prove that he was a teaching Presbyter. He had this right, as being a member of the college. His “making a great figure” on this occasion proves nothing. For it appears to have been the first time that he made any figure; and that, before their meeting, they had never viewed his gifts as transcending those of his fellows, or once thought of sending him on a mission.

Having considered every material exception to the important testimony of Bede, with respect to the *unusual* mode of government observed at Iona, I shall only further observe, that it must appear to every one, who will be at the trouble carefully and candidly to examine his testimony, that it is not to be viewed as an incidental remark, in reference to the territorial rights of the abbot or monastery; but that, as he introduces it when speaking of the mission of Aidan, he evidently keeps it in his eye in the whole account which he gives of this mission. It is unquestionably meant as the key by

Nam monachi erant maxime qui ad praedicandum venerant. Monachus ipse Episcopus Aidan, &c. Hist. lib. iii c. 3.

Alfred renders the language, as to preaching and baptizing, distributively; *Mid mycelre wilsumyssse Cristes gelefan bododon and laerdon. And tha the sacerd-hades wacron him fulluht thenedon.* “And those who were of the priesthood ministered baptism to them.”

which we are to interpret all his singular modes of expression on this subject.

We have seen, that his modern English translator has used considerable liberties with the text. But he had so much candour, as to acknowledge his dissatisfaction with the attempts which had been made to invalidate the testimony with respect to the “unusual order.” “This,” he says, “the learned Primate Usher contradicts, and urges from the Ulster Annals his keeping a bishop always in his monastery; and his successor Adamnanus tells us, that he paid submission to a certain prelate upon breaking bread at the altar. *Adamnan. in vit. Columbi apud Canisii Antiqu. Tom. 5.* Yet this proves nothing against what Bede says.”¹

Pennant gives a similar opinion. “In answer to this,” he says, “Archbishop Usher advances, that the power of the abbot of Iona was only local; and extended only to the bishop who resided there.—But notwithstanding this, the venerable Bede seems to be a stronger authority, than the Ulster Annals quoted by the archbishop, which pretend no more than that a bishop had always resided at Iona [i. e. according to Usher’s inference from them], without even an attempt to refute the positive assertion of the most respectable author we have (relating to church matters) in those primitive times.”²

But this is not all. I have said, that Bede still keeps this point, of the peculiarity of the ecclesiastical government at Iona, in his eye, when giving an account of the mission to the Angles. What he says, in the fifth chapter of his third

¹ Bede, 1723, p. 186, N.

² Tour in Scotl. 1772, part i. 293.

book, concerning the choice, mission, and ordination of Aidan, in the meeting of the Seniors, has been particularly considered; and also his testimony, in the chapter immediately preceding, concerning the *more inusitato*. We must allow the ancient writer to be the best interpreter of his own language. Having asserted, that the “bishops themselves” were subject to the monastery of Hii, he immediately proceeds more fully to shew the reason of this;—that they derived all their authority from this monastery. It is in the third chapter, that he enters on the subject of Aidan’s mission. Here, after relating that, in consequence of his settlement at Lindisfarne, many of the Scots entered this province, preached the word with great zeal, and administered baptism, those, to wit, who were admitted to the rank of priests; he subjoins, that churches were erected, and lands appropriated for establishing monasteries. “For they were chiefly monks,” he says, “who came to preach. Bishop Aidan himself was a monk, forasmuch as he was sent from the island which is called Hii; the monastery of which for a long time held the supremacy among almost all the monasteries of the Northern Scots, and those of all the Picts, and presided in the government of their people.”¹ In Alfred’s Anglo-Saxon version, it is *Ealdordom and heanesse onfeng*. We see in what light this excel-

¹ Monachus ipse Episcopus Aidan, utpote de insula, quae vocatur Hii, destinatus: cuius monasterium in cunctis pene Septentrionalium Scottorum, et omniū Pictorum monasteriis non parvo tempore arcem tenebat, regendisque eorum populis praeerat. Hist. lib. iii. c. 3.

lent prince understood the language of the historian. "It received the principality and exaltation."

This sentence supplies us with an incontestable proof of the sense in which we are to understand the unusual subject mentioned in the following chapter. It is to be understood, as given, not to the Presbyter-Abbot exclusively, but to the Abbot in conjunction with the Seniors. For the supremacy is, in the third chapter, ascribed to *the Monastery*. The

* *Ealdordom* is from *caldor*, "Senior, Princeps, Dux,—the chief, a president, a ruler, a captain, or chieftain." *Ealdordom* itself is rendered "authoritas, praefectura, principatus, authority, principality, rule, an office of government:" Somner. Dictionar. "Principatus, ducatus, primatus?" Lye Dictionar. "*Heaknesse, celsitudo, sublimitas, &c.* height, highnesse,—highest or principlall part of a thing?" Somner. It may be added, that *ealdordome* is the word which occurs in Alfred's version, as denoting the act of Archbishop Theodore in *presiding* in a Synod. *Cui Theodorus Archi-episcopus prae sidebat. Tham Sin othe on caldordome foresaet.* Bed. Hist. lib. iv. c. 28.

When *majores natu* is used by Bede, as the designation of those among whom "King Oswald and his followers had received the sacrament of baptism," and to whom "he sent, desiring that his whole nation might receive the grace of the Christian faith," Alfred employs a term radically the same with that, already considered, rendering it, *Scotta caldormannum*, literally "the Scottish Aldermen;" or, as it is properly expressed in the English version, "the Elders of the Scots." He uses the same word, in translating *majores*, in two places where it unquestionably denotes the senior monks; Book v. 14. *Corripiebatur quidem sedulo a fratribus ac majoribus loci;* "He was frequently reproved by the brethren, and *than ealdormannum thame stowe*, and the elders," or "seniors of the place," i.e. of the monastery. Ibid. c. 19. speaking of a boy, trained up in the monastery of Inbrypum, or Rippon, he says, *Merite a majoribus quasi unus ex ipsis amaretur;* "He was beloved, *fram his caldormannum*, of his seniors, as if he had been one of themselves." But it may be added, that, although the term *majores* is used by Bede, and *caldorman* by Alfred, to denote both civil and religious authority, neither of them, as far as I have observed, is once applied to Bishops.

last clause of the sentence fully determines the nature of the subjection. It could not be temporal, or referring to territorial right. For the monastery of Hii not only held the supremacy amongst the monasteries, but “presided in the government of *their people*,” i. e. not the inhabitants of these monasteries, but the subjects of the Scottish and Pictish thrones. Their jurisdiction, of course, must have been solely ecclesiastical.

Stapleton could have no other view of the passage. For he thus translates it: “The house of his religion was no small time the head house of all the monasteries of the northern Scottes and of abbyes of all the Redshankes, [the term by which he translates *Pictorum*,] and had the soueraintie in ruling of their people.”¹

It has been urged, that we can conclude nothing, from this unusual authority, against the establishment of episcopacy in Scotland, because the government of Oxford is vested in the university, exclusively of the bishop who resides there.² But the cases are by no means parallel. For, 1. The government of the whole province was vested in the abbot or college of monks. It has been said indeed, that the kings of England “might have extended the power of the university” of Oxford “through the whole diocess, had they pleased, and that it would not have been a suppressing of the order of bishops.”³ But, not to say that such a co-ordinate power would have been extremely galling to the episcopate,

¹ Fol. 79, a.

² Lloyd's Hist. Account, p. 180, 181.

³ Ibid.

it has been proved that the power of the monastery extended far beyond the limits which Bishop Lloyd has assigned to the pretended diocese of Hii. 2. The power itself is totally different. Although the Bishop of Oxford be subject to the university in civil matters, as well as the other inhabitants of that city ; what estimate would he form of the pretensions of that learned body, were they to claim a right of precedence, *regendis populis*, in governing all the people of his diocese ; and, as a proof of the nature of the government, the same which Bede gives, of sending forth missionaries to teach, to baptize, and to plant churches ?¹ The bishop, I apprehend, would rather be disposed to view this as a virtual “ suppressing of the order.”

The supposition has been otherwise stated with respect to an university. It has been said ; “ When a bishop is head of a college, in any of the universities, (which has frequently happened) he must be subject to the jurisdiction of the Vice-chancellor, though only a priest, and perhaps one of his own clergy.”² In reply, it has been properly enquired ; “ Were the bishops of Lindisfarn no otherwise subject to the monastery of Icolmkill, than the head of a college in any of the universities, becoming afterward a bishop, must be subject to the jurisdiction of the Vice-chancellor, who may be a priest in his own diocess ? Were they not ordained and sent by the monastery to be bishops of that kingdom, and even then subject to the monastery ?”³ The cases must, in-

¹ Hist. lib. iii. c. 3.

² Life of Sage, p. 52.

³ Vindication, p. 20.

deed, be viewed as totally dissimilar ; unless it can be shewn, that the head of a college may be “ sent, ordained, and consecrated to be a bishop of any diocese in England,” and yet “ continue subject to the university” from which he was sent.¹

It had been observed, in the vindication of Sir James Dalrymple’s Collections, that the bishops sent to Lindisfarne could not “ expect the ordinary concurrence of the abbot and college, because of the distance ;” that they brought ecclesiastics with them from Hii, and that others came afterwards, to assist them in the conversion of the Saxons ; and that those, who left their bishoprics among the Saxons, returned to Hii.² Gillan attempts to turn aside the force of these observations, by saying, that “ the Abbot’s commands might have been transmitted more easily and safely from Hii to Holy Island, than from thence to the north of Ireland, if we consider the boisterous sea, and the uncertainty of wind and waves ;” and by asking, with respect to the teachers, “ Whence could they have got them but from Hii ?” and as to their retreat, “ Whither should they go rather than to their own monastery ?”³ But he seems, in this instance, to pay little regard to the history of the times ; and entirely to overlook the intrepid spirit of the early inhabitants of the western islands and maritime coast, who were accustomed to venture to sea in such vessels as would now be deemed scarcely sufficient for crossing a river. We may well sup-

¹ Ibid.

² Vindic. p. 14, 15, &c.

³ Remarks, p. 87, 88.

pose, that the intercourse by land, from Hii to Northumbria, was frequently interrupted by the wars between the Picts and Scots, or between the latter and the Cumbrian Britons. We know that, in the year 642, which falls within the thirty years allotted to the mission to Lindisfarne, Donald Brec, King of Dalriada, or of the Scots, was slain in battle by Hoan, or Owen, King of Cumbria.¹ Now, the missionaries from Hii could not go by land, without passing through the Cumbrian territory ; unless they had taken a very circuitous course.

From the poverty of our materials, relating to this dark and distant period, it cannot reasonably be supposed, that every difficulty, which an ingenious mind may suggest, can be fully obviated. But there seems to be sufficient ground for concluding, that the missionaries, sent to Lindisfarne, were, even in the character of public teachers, amenable to the college at Iona. If they were not, they were completely independent : for they did not acknowledge subjection to the successors of Augustine, bishop, or archbishop, of Canterbury. Is it natural to imagine, that the abbot and monks of Iona, who were so jealous of their superiority in other respects, would consent to send so many of their clergy into Northumbria, if they were from that moment released from all subjection, unless they chose again to submit to the mere monastic rule ? It appears that Oswald, partly from early prejudice, as being himself educated at Hii, and partly perhaps from political motives, did not wish that the clergy in his

¹ Pinkerton's Enquiry, i. 116. Caledonia, i. 247, 248.

kingdom should have any connection with a see that depended on a foreign authority.

In another point of view, it is hardly credible, that the college at Hii would renounce all authority over these missionaries. When King Oswald applied to them for a bishop, it was not to preside over a church already organized, but to plant a church among a people, who, as the learned writer acknowledges, were "in a state of paganism."¹ Now, has it been usual in any church, whether of the episcopalian or presbyterian form, that those, who received a mission to preach the gospel to the heathen, should be henceforth viewed as quite independent of the authority of those who sent them? Besides, their being supplied with co-adjutors in the ministry, from Iona, must, by all candid enquirers, be considered as a proof of their continued dependence on that monastery. In a word, although we should plead nothing from the return of several of the bishops; the report which they gave of their conduct, on their return, to that very *conventus Seniorum*, by which they had been sent, must certainly be viewed as an incontestable evidence of their continued subjection, not as monks, but as missionaries. For the elders, in their meeting, did not merely receive such a report, but proceeded to judge of the conduct of the person, evidently claiming a right to inflict censure, if they judged it necessary.

We have one instance, at any rate, of the censure of re-

¹ Remarks, ut sup.

prehension, not only expressed by one member of this *conventus*, but evidently approved by all the rest. It is worthy of observation, indeed, that, when the first bishop, who had been sent to Lindisfarne, returned, on account of his want of success, and related this to the college of Hii, they acted precisely in such a manner, as we would suppose persons to do, who viewed themselves as having an inspection of Lindisfarne. We have no evidence from Bede, that there was either any complaint made by Oswald against the missionary, whose name, it is said, was Corman, or any application from Oswald for a successor. The Seniors seem to have held a council, immediately on Corman's return, and had much deliberation, or reasoning, as to *what should be done*, the result of which was, that they sent Aidan to Lindisfarne.¹ Nothing can be more evident, than that they acted as persons who were authorized to supply this vacancy.

The same writer asserts, that “the Scots and Britons, at the coming of Augustine into Britain, and for a long time thereafter, differed *in nothing* from the church of Rome, but only in the observation of Easter, and a few rites and ceremonies.” He afterwards admits, that, according to Bede, Augustine demanded that they should “preach the word of God together with him, i. e. own him as their archbishop, and consequently the Bishop of Rome as the Patriarch of the western church: for the Pope had not as yet claimed the

¹ Bed. Hist. Lib. iii. c. 7.

supremacy over the whole catholic church. He knew they embraced the same faith with himself.”¹

Here we discern the true spirit of those old episcopalians with whom the writer was connected. The attachment of many of them to Rome was far stronger, than to any class of Protestants who did not acknowledge the divine right of episcopacy. But was it *nothing* for “the Scots and Britons” to receive a foreigner imposed on them in a character which they had never recognised, by an Italian priest whose claims they had never learned to acknowledge? Be it so, that the Bishop of Rome had not yet assumed the title of *Universal*; was it a matter in which *faith* was nowise concerned, to withstand the workings of “the mystery of iniquity,” to oppose “the Man of sin” in every step that he took towards his exaltation? This writer’s idea of “the *faith* of the saints,” whatever he might think of their “patience,” is certainly very different from that of John the Divine.² Augustine held the synod referred to in the year 603. Before this time, towards the close of the preceding century, there had been a violent contest between the Bishop of Constantinople and the Bishop of Rome, with respect to the claim to this imposing title: and it was only three years after the meeting of this synod, or in the year 606, that the tyrant Phocas, by an imperial edict, gave it to the Bishop of Rome, settling the supremacy on him and his successors.³ If it was not unpardon-

¹ Life of Sage, p. 55, 56.

² Geddes’s Miscel. Tracts, ii. 17.

³ Rev. xiii. 10.

able presumption, in such obscure men as the clergy of “the Britons and Scots,” to pretend to judge of a question of this nature; if they ever meant to oppose the encroachments of the great usurper, surely there was no time to be lost.

But whatever the warm adherents of an exiled and popish family, in this country, might think of the conduct of our ancestors; or what inference soever they might deduce from the language of Bede; we have a very different testimony from the pen of a celebrated Lutheran of another country, who may be viewed as an impartial judge on this subject, unless we suppose that he, as well as Sir James Dalrymple, was blinded by his sincere attachment to the protestant cause. “The ancient Britons and Scots,” he says, “persisted long in the maintenance of their religious liberty; and neither the threats nor promises of the legates of Rome could engage them to submit to the decrees and authority of the ambitious pontif, as appears manifestly from the testimony of Bede.”¹

Gillan seems to view it as no inconsiderable concession which he makes to the ancient “Britons and Scots,” when he admits, that the adherents of Rome did not “think them hereticks.”² But the Britons and Scots treated them as such, and therefore refused to have any fellowship with them; as may be afterwards demonstrated.

It may be added, that, what judgment soever the Romanists formed of the Britons, the latter had no reason to think fa-

¹ Mosheim’s Eccles. Hist. ii. 170, 171.

² Life of Sage, p. 57.

vorably of them. Let us hear the evidence of one, who was himself an archbishop, and a warm friend of episcopacy, concerning Augustine. "Whilst he strove to conform the British churches to the Romane in rites ecclesiastic, and to have himself acknowledged for the only *Archbishop of Britain*, he did cast the church into a sea of troubles. After divers conferences, and much pains taken by him to perswade the Britons into conformity, when he could not prevail, he made offer, that, if they would yield to minister baptisme, and observe Easter according to the Romane manner, and be assisting to him in reforming the Saxons, for all other things they should be left to their ancient customs. But they refusing to make any alteration, he fell a threatening, and said, *That they who would not have peace with their brethren, should finde warre with their enemies.* This falling out, as he foretold (for Edelfrid, King of Northumberland, invading them with a strong army, slew at one time 1200 monks that were assembled to pray for the safety of their countrymen) made Augustine to be suspected of the murder, and did purchace him a great deal of hatred: whether he foreknew the practice or not, is uncertain, but shortly after the murder of these monks he himself died."

The monks referred to were chiefly those of Bangor, in Wales. Their abbot Dinoth was sacrificed with them. Bede represents this calamity as the effect of the prophecy delivered by the *pious* Augustine. But there is every reason to

* Spotswood's History, p. 12.

believe, that the prediction was founded on a predetermined plan. As there had been a previous conference with these monks, Archbishop Parker, speaking of what Bede relates concerning Augustine's prediction, as if the war had been a divine judgment in completion of it, says: "It is more probable that he, having taken counsel with King Ethelbert, not only knew of the war, but was himself the cause of it. For he lived in the greatest familiarity with that king, at whose persuasion and instigation Edelfrid brought this destruction on the Britons. It is affirmed, indeed, that, in the first conference concerning these rites, Augustine, when he saw that the monks would not be persuaded, uttered his threatening: hence it is not improbable, that war was prepared against the Britons, if they should not comply in the second meeting. Some also assert, that Augustine met the kings at Caer-leon, when prepared for that battle."¹

Later popish writers, in order to exculpate Augustine, have attempted to shew that he was dead before this battle was fought: and, as we now have the Latin of Bede's history, it would seem that this worthy writer had said so. But the proof is evidently an interpolation. For there is not a word on this subject in the Saxon version; whence there is reason to conclude, that, in the time of Alfred the Great, by whom this version was made, this apology for the Roman missionary had not been devised. The language of Bede, indeed, shews how far he was blinded by his zeal for conformity to Rome. "And thus," he

¹ *Antiq. Britann.* c. 18.

says, “ was the prediction of the holy pontif Augustine fulfilled, *though he had himself been long before removed to the heavenly kingdom*, that these perfidious men might feel the vengeance of temporal destruction, because they had despised the counsels of eternal salvation offered to them.”¹ It is said by Amandus Xierixiensis, a friar Minorite, apparently of Xeres in Spain, that “ this war was raised against the Britons on account of their disobedience to St Augustine; because the Saxons, who had been converted to Christianity, were resolved to subject the Britons to his authority.”²

¹ Sieque completum est praesagium sancti pontificis Augustini, *quamvis ipso jam multo ante tempore ad coelestia regna sublato*, ut etiam temporalis interitus ultione sentirent perfidi, quod oblata sibi perpetuae salutis consilia spreverant. Hist. Lib. ii. c. 2. In the Saxon version, there is nothing correspondent to the words here printed in italics.

² Sed cum Augustinus vellet Episcopos et Abbates Britonum adducere auctoritate apostolica, ut eum legatum reciperent, et cum eo Anglis praedicarent, mota est discordia propter eorum inobedientiam ad sanctum Augustinum, et sic motum fuit bellum inter Britonum regulos et Saxonum regulos: qui jam conversi volebant Britones Augustino subdere. Ap. Parker, ubi sup.